

FRENCH INDO-CHINA

a parish formed by alluvial deposits in the Red River. His remarkable organizing ability was shown not only among his parishioners but by the building of dykes and a cathedral in the Annamite style, with only the resources of his followers. Men like Joffre and Lyautey visited him and many came to ask his advice. The court of Hue, his erstwhile prosecutor, now made him honorary Minister of Rites. He was named Baron of Phat Diem, he was made Officer of the Legion of Honour, and, as crowning glory, 40,000 people attended his funeral. His life is an illustration of the Mission thesis that Christianity is the best bridge which can span the abyss between Oriental and Occidental cultures.

It is not coincidence that the religious movement, both within and without the Church, took on a nationalist tincture. The self-assertion of the Annamite clergy synchronized with the birth of a new politico-religious sect in Cochin-China called Caodaism in 1926. On the religious side it has an eclectic character—a reform version of Buddhism which includes Taoist and Catholic dogmas. It is a compromise between the old and the new, a reconciliation of Eastern and Western concepts. Its guiding deity is a spirit named Cao-Dai, whose Pope was an extremely able Annamite named Le-Van Trung. The headquarters is at Tayninh, where a pagoda has been constructed, manned by a priesthood, nourished by a domain of rice-fields and flanked by a village, school, printing press, and weavers' looms. There is a Ghandiesque flavour about creating a community which is economically self-sufficient. At first the government, true to its policy of protecting native religions, encouraged the movement, but its enormous growth, its close-knit organization, its clandestine meetings, and the presence of dubious

characters, in
government eyes, among its disciples soon made the
state nervous.
It might be Communism masquerading as religion, and
there was an
undeniable similarity between the two organizations. It
has also created
a hitherto unknown fanaticism in the colony: the spirit
of Cao-Dai can
save the Indo-Chinese who have lost their
independence as punish-
ment for their sins. Nationalists and Caodaists use to
good effect the
plea for liberty of conscience, and claim that the state's
persecution—
the mild Pa&quier was particularly virulent—of this
religion is un-
justified. The King of Cambodia has abolished
Caodaism from his
realm and now only tolerates Buddhism and Catholicism.
The Mission's
attitude has received official approbation. The death of
Le-Van Trung
in 1935 coincides with the freedom recently granted
to this cult by
Robin,

The Mission which encouraged the conquest has
been, on the whole,